

Public Affairs Office, Task Force Hope – New Orleans

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News Orleans: unwatered

NEW ORLEANS, Oct. 11 -- Today, forty-three days after hurricane Katrina hit the New Orleans metropolitan area, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers claimed victory in unwatering the city.

The Corps' Task Force Unwatering Team, working together with the Orleans Parish Sewerage and Water Board and Entergy Corporation have worked non-stop in their efforts to 'dry' the city of over 224 billion gallons of water.

"Today is a huge step forward in the rebuilding process for New Orleans," said Task Force Unwatering commander, Col. Duane P. Gapinski.

"We have battled 24-hours-a-day for the last 43 days to fill the levee breaches and remove the flood waters from the city of New Orleans. The city is now accessible for recovery and repair operations," Gapinski said.

In Orleans East and Orleans Parish, conditions have been set for normal recovery operations. Pump stations are still operating to drain small pockets of water that have no effect on recovery operations. Corps officials said they will begin closing the drainage notches at Six Flags this week and are coordinating with contractors and German pump teams to reposition pumps at Pump Station 5 and the Sewerage Treatment Plant.

Temporary repairs on the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal, 17th Street and London Avenue canals now all meet the requirements for 10-foot interim protection level.

As the Corps now focuses on completing interim protection measures and restoring the system, Col. Richard P. Wagenaar, New Orleans District Engineer said, "We're making great progress. I am confident the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will meet and exceed the significant engineering challenges we face, and will once again make this city a home to the families and businesses of New Orleans."

Work continues with the Corps' Task Force Guardian whose authority and mission is to restore the Federal levees that provide hurricane relief and flood protection in the region to pre-Katrina level of performance by June 2006.